

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UK, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO EUROPE

1. WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S COMMENTS ON FOLLOWING GENERAL BRIEFING PAPER ON NORTHERN ENGLAND BY COB TUESDAY, APRIL 26, SLUGGED FOR EUR/NE. PHONED COMMENTS ALSO WELCOMED, BUT WE ARE INTERESTED IN FLESHING IT OUT A BIT, E.G. WITH PARAS ON WASHINGTON, NEW TOWN AND NEWCASTLE. PARA ON SUNDERLAND GLASS WORKS BASED ON FRAGMENTARY AND DATED INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US HERE AND SHOULD BE CHECKED CAREFULLY.

2. BEGIN TEXT.

NORTHERN ENGLAND

GEOGRAPHY

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THE GREATER PART OF THE REGION, WHICH INCLUDES THE METROPOLITAN COUNTY OF TYNE AND WEAR AND THE COUNTIES OF NORTHUMBERLAND, DURHAM, CLEVELAND ON THE EAST COAST; AND CUMBRIA ON THE WEST COAST, IS AN AREA OF HILLS, LAKES AND MOORLAND IN THE NORTHERN ENGLAND JUST BELOW THE SCOTTISH BORDER. THE OUTLYING AREAS ARE RELATIVELY THINLY

POPULATED (AND GENERALLY CONSERVATIVE IN POLITICAL TERMS).
MOST OF THE POPULATION IS CONCENTRATED IN THE EASTERN

COASTAL STRIP STRETCHING FROM THE COALFIELDS NORTH OF THE
RIVER TYNE (WHICH PASSES THROUGH NEWCASTLE) SOUTH TO THE
RIVER TEES.

POLITICS

THE URBAN AREA ALONG THE EAST COAST AND JUST IN FROM IT
IS HISTORICALLY AND SOLIDLY LABOR. OF THE 27 MEMBERS OF
PARLIAMENT (MP'S) FROM THIS AREA, 25 ARE LABOR, TWO
CONSERVATIVES. MANY ARE SKILLED WORKERS (ENGINEERING) AND
WHAT WE WOULD TERM MIDDLE CLASS (TEACHERS, CIVIL SERVANTS).
A GOOD NUMBER ARE UNION-SPONSORED MP'S. THE MOST PROMINENT
AMONG THEM IS EDWARD SHORT, A NEWCASTLE MP WHO UNTIL LAST
YEAR WAS LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AND DEPUTY LEADER
OF THE LABOR PARTY. THE AREA IS SO SOLIDLY LABOR THAT IT
IS LIKELY TO BE ONE OF THE FEW WHOSE LOCAL GOVERNMENT
REMAINS IN LABOR 'ANDS IF THE MAY 5 ENGLISH LOCAL ELECTIONS
GO STRONGLY AGAINST THE LABOR PARTY.

ECONOMICS

THE NORTH, RELATIVELY MORE DEPENDENT ON LONG-ESTABLISHED
HEAVY INDUSTRY THAN OTHER REGIONS, HAS THE HIGHEST
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE OF ANY REGION IN ENGLAND - 9 IN US
TERMS IN FEBRUARY. HEAVY INDUSTRY IS CONCENTRATED IN
COALMINING, IRON & STEEL, SHIPBUILDING AND REPAIRING, AND
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CHEMICALS. OTHER TYPES OF INDUSTRY HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY
ESTABLISHED IN THE AREA, INCLUDING HEAVY ELECTRICAL,
MINING MACHINERY, ROLLING MILL PLANT, EARTH MOVING EQUIP-
MENT, MACHINE TOOLS, ROPE, PAINT, CLOTHING, SCIENTIFIC
INSTRUMENTS, AND GLASS MANUFACTURING - INCLUDING THE
CORNING PLANT YOU WILL VISIT WITH CALLAGHAN.

THERE IS A MAJOR ALUMINUM SMELTER ON THE NORTHUMBERLAND
COAST AND CONSIDERABLE INVESTMENT UNDER THE STATE-OWNED
NATIONAL COAL BOARD'S AUSPICES IS TAKING PLACE IN THE
COALMINING INDUSTRY TO EXPLOIT LARGE RESERVES UNDER THE
NORTH SEA OFF THE NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM COASTS AND TO
BOOST STRIP MINING OUTPUT. THE REGION IS ALSO INVOLVED IN
THE NORTH SEA OIL PROGRAM, THOUGH TO A MUCH LESSOR EXTENT
THAN THE NORTHEAST COAST OF SCOTLAND.

WASHINGTON OLD HALL

WASHINGTON OLD HALL IS A 17TH CENTURY JACOBEOAN MANOR CON-

TAINING PORTIONS OF THE ORIGINAL WASHINGTON HOUSE BELONG-
ING TO THE FIRST RECORDED MEMBER OF THE WASHINGTON FAMILY.
GENERATIONS OF WASHINGTONS LIVED AT THE HALL IN UNBROKEN
CONTINUITY FROM 1183 TO 1613, WHEN THE CADET BRANCH OF THE

FAMILY, OF WHICH GEORGE WASHINGTON IS A DIRECT DESCENDENT,
MOVED TO SULGRAVE MANOR IN SOUTHERN ENGLAND.

IN ONE OF MANY GENEROUS AND IMAGINATIVE GESTURES BY THE
BRITISH TO MARK THE BICENTENNIAL, A TWENTY-ONE YEAR LEASE
ON WASHINGTON OLD HALL (WITHOUT ADMINISTRATIVE OR FISCAL
"STRINGS") WAS GIVEN TO THE US IN A CEREMONY IN WASHINGTON
IN 1975.

CORNING GLASS PLANT, SUNDERLAND

THE WEAR GLASS WORKS (AS THE BRITISH CALL INDUSTRIAL
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PLANTS) IS ONE OF A NUMBER OF PLANTS IN THE UK OWNED BY
CORNING USA. ANOTHER NEARBY CORNING SUBSIDIARY MANU-
FACTURES GLASS, CERAMIC, AND TANTALUM RESISTORS,
CAPACITORS, AND POTENTIOMETERS. THE WEAR WORKS MANU-
FACTURES HOUSEHOLD PYREX AND GLASS LABORATORY WARE. IT
IS PART OF A GROUP OF COMPANIES OWNED BY THE JAMES A.
JOBBLING CO. LTD., ANOTHER WHOLLY-OWNED SUBSIDIARY OF
CORNING USA. THE JOBLING GROUP HAS SALES OF AROUND \$35
MILLION A YEAR, OF WHICH ABOUT \$15 MILLION ARE EXPORTS.
THE GROUP EMPLOYS 4,200. THE WEAR PLANT ITSELF IS
CURRENTLY UNDERGOING A \$35 MILLION EXPANSION PROGRAM.

THE US IS BY FAR THE LARGEST DIRECT INVESTOR IN THE UK.
OUR COMPANIES' ASSETS TOTALLED \$13.9 BILLION BOOK VALUE
AT LAST COUNT IN 1975. ACCORDING TO A 1976 PRIVATE STUDY,
US MANUFACTURING AFFILIATES IN THE UK IN RECENT YEARS
ACCOUNTED FOR 12 OF ALL UK MANUFACTURING OUTPUT, 16 OF
UK EXPORTS, AND 9 OF THE LABOR FORCE. END TEXT.
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